REMARKS

Claims 1 – 15 are pending in the present application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5 – 7 and 9 – 15 have been amended. No new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated March 3, 2004.

Claim Objections:

Claims 5, 6, 7 and 9 – 15stand objected to on page 2 of the Action due to minor informalities. However, each of claims 5 – 7 and 9 – 15 has been amended to correct such informality. As such, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph Rejection

Claims 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 7 has been amended to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

As To The Merits

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner sets forth the following rejections:

1) claims 1 – 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Tanner, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,636,784); and

2) claims 7 – 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanner in view of Weiss (U.S. Patent No. 6,681,156).

Each of these rejections is respectfully traversed.

Each of the independent claims 1, 5, 7 and 12 has been amended to call for that electric power which is purchased by a management company based on a purchase contract with the electric power company in consideration of the total amount of necessary electric power is received collectively from an electric power company at a high voltage, and the received electric power is distributed to each house hold at a low voltage.

The present invention and Tanner differ in that the present invention relates to a method for collectively receiving power at high voltage and distributing at low voltage.

Figs. 2 and 3 of the present invention illustrate an example of power distribution for which the method of the present invention may be applied. Power at a high voltage for example 6000 V is collectively received by a power distribution device 300 from an electric company, and is distributed from the power distribution device 300 to each household at a low voltage for example 100 or 200 V through a breaker 130 (paragraphs 0007 and 0008). If the method of the present invention is used in this system, a household having an excessive current capacity can

supply the excessive current capacity to a user requiring a larger current, so that a contracted current used by each household is appropriately distributed depending on a maximum demanded current of each household in order to reduce a total amount of contracted current of the whole collective housing, which results in a small base rate under a power contract with the electric power company. A variable contract capacity system is adopted for effectively using an excessive current capacity. The variable contact capacity system can reset a contracted current into a desired one for each household in the collective housing, and the contracted current for each household is determined by demanding and supplying a current capacity within the collective housing (paragraphs 0047 and 0048). A management company or a resident's association should deal with managements like reading a power meter, collecting an electricity bill, maintaining the power meter and so on. In this system, the controller 131 of each household 13a... is connected with the server 12. Information on an amount of power consumed in each household is fed from the controller 131 and to the server 12, and the server 12 reads a power meter etc. Thus the management company can obtain information from the server 12 and collect electricity bills (paragraphs 0052 and 0053).

In other words, it is a management company (or a resident's association) who has an electricity purchase contract with an electric power company and re-distributes power to each household. The management company manages total amount of electric power used by each household, and makes purchase contract with the electric power company in consideration of the total amount of necessary electric power and rate for the contract. An individual contract is made between the management company and each household, based on which electric power will be re-distributed to each household. Since the management company makes best contact

with the electric power company, as described in paragraph 0057 of the specification, each household may use necessary electric power at lower rate than making direct contact with the electric company.

On the other hand, Tanner does not disclose such management of the total amount of electric power used by each household. That is, Tanner fails to disclose or fairly suggest the newly claimed feature concerning electric power which is purchased by a management company based on a purchase contract with the electric power company in consideration of the total amount of necessary electric power is received collectively from an electric power company at a high voltage, and the received electric power is distributed to each house hold at a low voltage.

In addition, the present invention calls for *grasping a maximum current capacity necessary for each of the users, determining a contracted current for each of the users depending on the maximum current capacity, and distributing power to each of the users.*

For example, as discussed on pages 21 and 22 of the present specification with referring to Fig, 8. A standard contracted current 30A is given to each household. When reviewing the amount of power consumption of each household, it is found that a current 20A is enough for the households A and E. The excessive current capacity is purchased by the management company and is registered in the server 12 as an additional capacity for sale. The management company notifies each household that the additional capacity is available. When the households B and D are willing to increase their contracted current, they notify it to the server 12 from the controller

131. When it is determined that the households B and D buy a current capacity 10A respectively from the additional capacity registered by the management company, the server 12 directs to change the set of the breaker 130 so that a contracted current to be distributed to B and D is changed to 40A.

In other words, the maximum current capacity necessary for each of the users A and E, C, and B and D is determined to be 20A, 30A, 40A, respectively.

The applied reference of Tanner is not concerned at all with *grasping a maximum current capacity necessary for each of the users, determining a contracted current for each of the users depending on the maximum current capacity, and distributing power to each of the users,* as called for in the present invention.

Instead, Tanner's invention provides an electricity transfer station and a method of operating the electricity transfer station that allows electricity to be secured by a customer of an electricity supplier via a transmission network under an existing electricity supply contract and re-delivered by that customer to another party under a non-interruptible supply contract without risk of increasing the customer's peak demand above a desired value.

In the Office Action, the Examiner relies on column 4, lines 58 – 67 of Tanner for teaching the features of the claimed invention concerning determining a maximum current capacity necessary for each of the users, determining a contracted current for each of the users depending on the maximum current capacity, and distributing power to each of the users.

However, column 4, lines 58 – 67 of Tanner calls for the following:

> The first value is a maximum electricity flow determined by the electricity customer 22 (Fig.1), which may be based on the contractual and/or physical limitations of the electricity customer's substation. The first value may also be the electrical customer's contractual peak demand or other peak demand limit set by the electricity transfer station 20.[1]

That is, while Tanner may be concern with allowing a customer to re-deliver electricity received by the customer wherein the maximum electricity flow to the customer remains below a peak demand, Tanner is completely silent with regard to determining a maximum current capacity for each of the users.

In addition, Tanner also fails to disclose the features of claims 2 and 9 of the present invention concerning allocating an excessive current capacity which is not necessary for one user to another user who needs the excessive current capacity.

Again, Tanner is concerned with the re-delivery of electricity by a customer received below a peak rate and not with allocating an excessive current capacity which is not necessary for one user to another user who needs the excessive current capacity, as called for in claims 2 and 9.

In addition, claims 5, 11 and 15 each call for determining user who adds a current capacity by an auction when a total requested current is larger than a total contracted current to be distributed.

[1] Please see, lines 58 – 63, column 4 of Tanner.

For example, when the additional capacity for sale corresponds to a request from an applicant household who is willing to buy the additional capacity, the base rate is merely distributed corresponding to the contracted current. When the capacity requested from the applicant household exceeds the additional capacity for sale, a buyer may be determined by an auction.

It is respectfully submitted that Tanner fails to disclose or fairly suggest the features of claims 5, 11 and 15 concerning determining a user who adds a current capacity by an auction when a total requested current is larger than a total contracted current to be distributed.

In addition, Tanner also fails to disclose the features of claims 8 and 12 concerning a control device for controlling and displaying information on power consumed by each of the users is provided, and the control device and the server are connected via the network.

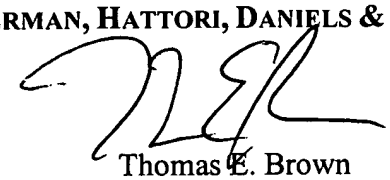
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP



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